



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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October 12, 2005

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Craig McLaughlin, Executive Director

SUBJECT: PROPOSED NEXT STEPS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Background and Summary

On September 7, the State Board of Health held a daylong strategic planning session facilitated by a consultant, Sam Magill, with assistance from Board Chair Kim Marie Thorburn and me. The morning session featured discussions about the Board's vision statement, mission statement, and goals for 2005-07. The Board provided direction that will allow staff, in consultation with Dr. Thorburn and Mr. Magill, to propose revisions for the full Board to consider.

The afternoon was mostly spent brainstorming possible objectives under each of the goals and discussing those objectives. The participants generated numerous objectives, as well as others ideas that seemed more like initiatives, strategies, or guidance about how the Board might choose its objectives and initiatives. The facilitator conducted an informal poll to establish relative support for each of the ideas. The next agenda item was intended to be a discussion of possible policy initiatives—the 12 proposals developed by the policy committees as well as any ideas for other proposals that had emerged during the day's discussions. Because of the high level of Board engagement, the objectives discussion ran long. It also produced confusion about the relationship between the objectives brainstorm and polling process and the proposed initiatives. The Board ended the meeting without discussing the committee initiatives. Some members expressed frustration that the committee proposals weren't discussed or included in the vote, while others expressed concern that the committee proposals could supplant ideas that had emerged during the day.

Subsequent to the meeting, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) issued revised draft instructions about strategic planning (attached). Although the guidance is for 2007-09, it does suggest a preferred framework for strategic planning. Under this guidance, the plans should cover a five-year period. In preparing plans, agencies should consider vision statements, mission statements, statutory references, objectives, strategies and activities, performance measures, and assessments of the environment capacity and finances.

The recommended hierarchy for the elements of the plan is:

Mission → Goal → Objective → Strategy → Activity → Outcome Measures → Action Steps
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The discussion section of this memo describes a proposed sequence of steps and a tentative timeline for continuing to develop agency strategic plans. I recommend that this plan conform, to the extent reasonably possible, to OFM guidelines.

For today's meeting, we have scheduled 30 minutes for Board members to comment on the September meeting and discuss future steps, including the suggestions contained in this memo. We have also scheduled two hours for committees to present their proposals and for the Board to ask questions and discuss the proposals. The proposals are behind Tab 11. If time permits, we will conduct a prioritization exercise.

The Board's discussions today, as well as the results of any prioritization, will inform the development of a staff proposal for a strategic plan. Staff will attempt to synthesize all of the various inputs—including both the September 7 brainstorm and prioritization and today's discussion of committee proposals—to develop a draft plan. Staff will work closely with Mr. Magill and Dr. Thorburn and will consult as needed with committee chairs and other Board members.

Recommended Board Action

No formal action is required. The Board's discussion and direction will be considered in the drafting of a strategic plan that will be proposed to the full Board at a future meeting.

Discussion

I believe the Board needs to be somewhat flexible in its strategic planning process to encourage the kind of engagement and high-level thinking that took place at the September 7 meeting, to make sure all viewpoints are considered, and to allow plenty of opportunity for deliberation and refinement. Many possible activities are time-dependent or ongoing, however, and staff will need guidance soon about whether to continue or initiate these projects. And the more time and resources we put into planning, the less time and resources will be available for implementing elements of the plan. With this in mind I am recommending the following timeline:

March-August 2005: Key informant interviews and surveys. Committee develops proposals. Staff, Chair, and consultant develop agenda for September 7 meeting.

September 7, 2005: Board meets to discuss vision, mission, goals, and objectives.

September 8-October 11, 2005: Staff, Chair, and consultant develop recommendations for next steps. Staff, working with consultant, begins synthesizing input from September 7 meeting; begins redrafting mission statement, vision statement, and goals; and starts to synthesize input from objectives brainstorming exercise and prioritization vote.

October 12, 2005: Board meeting includes discussion of September 7 meeting and next steps, as well as presentation and discussion of initiatives proposed by committees.

October 13-28, 2005: Staff, working with consultant and Chair, synthesizes all inputs from September 7 and October 12 meetings, develops proposed language for mission, vision, and goals; and organizes Board suggestions into hierarchy of objectives, strategies, and activities. Staff will also incorporate forums, the state health report, and various ongoing commitments into the framework developed. Where possible, staff will also include a preliminary work plan and action steps for specific activities, and suggest possible outcome measures. This results in production of a “reach” strategic plan, one that is not all-inclusive or completely unrealistic, but errs on the side of inclusiveness and is probably overly ambitious. This plan will be incomplete at the lower levels.

October 27, 2005: Preliminary draft of plan goes to Chair and committee chairs for review.

November 2, 2005: Preliminary draft goes to full Board for review one week prior to November meeting.

November 9, 2005: Bulk of November meeting dedicated to review and discussion of initial draft of the plan. Board tests for understanding, acceptance, and support for mission, vision, goals, and objectives, revising as necessary. Board makes strategic choices to narrow strategies and activities from a “reach” plan to a more realistic plan given Board resources. As time permits, Board offers suggestions about actions steps and outcome measures.

November-December 2005: Committees and committee staff “fill in the blanks”—develop work plans, identifying outcome measures and operational work plan and actions steps for each activity. Staff works on additional elements requested by OFM—statutory references, measures and assessment of current performance, assessment of the environment, capacity, and finance. Work begins on activities that are time-dependent and clearly have the support of the Board.

December 7, 2005: Staff provides Board with update on progress of the plan. Board reviews and comments on drafts of the additional elements.

January 11, 2006: Final draft of strategic plan presented to full Board for review and adoption.

January 12-February 2006: Finishing touches applied to final document and formatting completed. Any changes after January 11 will be subject to review and approval of Chair.